

Online Ceremonies

Online ceremonies - funeral and memorials - enable loved ones who can be spread across the globe to participate in the ceremonies. At the Willow Tree Foundation we refer to people as joining or participating, rather than simply watching.

Why?

Because funerals and memorials are about connecting. Connecting with the person who has died and connecting with fellow mourners. Not being able to be there in person can sometimes create a sense of isolation, when what we are really wanting is to feel a part of the grieving community that is coming together.

Participating Online

A service may be live streamed or recorded as well so you can join later.

If you are participating in a ceremony remotely, actively participate if you can – stand when others stand, light a candle if that is happening, sing if there is singing.

Consider having someone present at the service ‘Zoom’ you in on their phone and hold it accordingly so you have a sense of walking with them if they go forward to light a candle etc.

It may also help to create a sense of connection by ‘setting the scene’. Some options you may consider are:

- Wearing the clothes you would if you were physically there (but don't worry if you feel like wearing comfy trackies or pj's that's ok too)
- Creating a special little nook away from daily hustle and bustle and trying to minimise outside noise and interruptions
- Preparing some meaningful or gentle music that makes you think of the person who died and having it on hand to listen to after the service ends
- Setting up special food and drink that you can delve into after the service

So often when an online service ends we can be left with a sense of abruptness – unfinished business, as if we have been cut loose prematurely and don't quite know what to do with ourselves.

Giving ourselves this extra time allows us to stay in the moment and gently ease ourselves back into the outside world when we feel ready. Above all try not to twist yourself up in a knot about not being there in person. Because by showing up online you are demonstrating your commitment to being and sharing with those you care about.